

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00679 222125Z

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05

PM-03 PA-01 SP-02 NSAE-00 /036 W

-----090386 231025Z /13

R 221540Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0007

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L B A N G U I 0679

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, CT, KN, KS

SUBJ: BOKASSA TO VISIT NORTH KOREA

1. SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY INFORMS US THAT IT HAS LEARNED THAT EMPEROR BOKASSA WILL VISIT PYONGYANG IN LATE APRIL. A FOUR-MAN ADVANCE TEAM OF PROTOCOL AND SECURITY EXPERTS IS TO LEAVE IN EARLY APRIL. ACCORDING TO SOUTH KOREANS, VISIT IS TIMED AS PART OF BUILD-UP FOR KIM IL SUNG'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION APRIL 27. SOUTH KOREANS BELIEVE THAT DURING VISIT NORTH KOREA WILL OFFER SUBSTANTIAL AID -- PERHAPS AS MUCH AS \$3 MILLION -- FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW IMPERIAL PALACE IN BERENGO. THEY FEAR THAT NORTH KOREA IS SEEKING CAE SUPPORT IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND POSSIBLY EVEN A BREAK IN CAE-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS. BOKASSA IS LIKELY TO STOP IN PEKING, ACCORDING TO THE SOUTH KOREANS.

2. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD INDEPENDENTLY THAT BOKASSA'S TRIP TO PYONGYANG IS LIKELY AND MAY TAKE PLACE EVEN SOONER THAN THE SOUTH KOREANS BELIEVE. (FOR SECURITY REASONS, ALL IMPERIAL
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TRAVEL PLANS ARE HELD VERY CLOSELY WITHIN THE GOCAE.) WE KNOW THAT THE NEW PALACE PROJECT IS HIGH ON BOKASSA'S LIST OF PRIORITIES RIGHT NOW. IF NORTH KOREAN AID IS ENOUGH, HE MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BREAK RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA. HOWEVER, SOUTH KOREA HAS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND TO BOKASSA OVER THE YEAR, PROVIDING HIM WITH CASH FOR THE CORONATION (\$50,000), RADIO-EQUIPPED VEHICLES FOR HIS BODYGUARDS, AMBULANCES AND DOCTORS.

ALSO, HIS COLLEAGUE GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO HAS MAINTAINED
RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA IN SPITE OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO
PYONGYANG, AND BOKASSA HAS A POLICY OF RELATIONS WITH BOTH
SIDES ON MOST ISSUES.
SMITH

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NNN

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